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Groups: take another look at Halloween

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Gone are the days of carefree, fun trick-or-treating around the neighborhood and donning superhero costumes for elementary school Halloween parties.

The Religion News-writers Association, in its ReligionLink e-newsletter to its members, has suggested that religion writers examine the evolution of Halloween from a day for candy and costumes to a day that sparks debate about whether the holiday promotes evil and should be allowed in public schools.

Among the Halloween inputs suggested by the association:

"For a significant number of people, it represents the full expression of an occult viewpoint," Robert Knight, director of cultural studies for the Family Research Council, is quoted as saying in an article on "Banning Halloween" found on beliefnet.com.

"If you're going to kick Christian celebrations like Christmas out of the schools and leave Halloween in, you're going to have a reaction and if they're going to be even-handed in not establishing religion in schools, they're probably going to have to do away with Halloween," he said.



LONG AGO DAYS — Elena Westbury (left), age three, and her sister Charlotte, age six, enjoy a recent trip to an Atlanta-area pumpkin patch, hearkening to a time when Halloween was much more child-friendly than it is today. (BP photo by Joe Westbury)

Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Seminary in California, in a beliefnet.com column titled, "Making Real Decisions About Halloween," is sympathetic to the trend of evangelicals getting stricter on Halloween.

Christians should be "increasingly nervous about Halloween practices in light of new developments in our culture," he wrote, particularly that the focus of Halloween is no longer primarily on children.

"Certainly, the costume displays I have been seeing in Southern California since mid-September are not dominated by Casper the Friendly Ghost outfits and pint-size witch's hats for kids," he wrote. "Most of the stuff is meant for raucous parties for big people."

Mouw also warns that Christians should be aware of what logicians call the genetic fallacy, which occurs when people assume that just because

something started off with a certain meaning it still has that meaning.

In light of such changes, the Religion News-writers Association newsletter suggests articles exploring how religious concerns have altered Halloween celebrations in public schools and neighborhoods in their communities.

"How communities deal with the Halloween concerns of parents and religious groups can influence future interfaith relations and interactions," the Oct. 7 RNA newsletter said.

Conservative Christians are responding to Halloween these days by offering alternatives known as Hell Houses and Judgment Houses instead of the common haunted houses. More than 800 resource kits for the two alternatives have been purchased by churches across the country, the newsletter reported.

"We can no longer take 'innocent' HALLOWEENS for granted," Mouw wrote. "(We) must be especially diligent in teaching ourselves and our children that the real antidote to the threat of evil has been provided through the death and resurrection of the One who is the Lord of all our days and nights."

Church helps witches old-fashioned way: prayer

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Years ago, Halloween conjured up shrieking costumed children, pouncing up the driveway eagerly screaming for another candy treat. Few Christians worried about the magic or witchcraft found in fairy tales or in the television show "Bewitched."

Today, magic and witchcraft permeate American culture. Bill Losasso, senior pastor of Pathways Community Church in Largo, Fla., regards the Sunshine State as "one of the three hotbeds for witchcraft along with Texas and California."

Losasso said he gained new insight into the occult when a few witches attempted to disrupt the church's worship services. They eventually made professions of faith.

When the first witch came to cause problems, the congregation did what was natural for them — prayed for wisdom, direction, protection, and victory in Jesus. Then they welcomed her in and witnessed to her.

That first witch was determined to make the church pay and "hit them where it hurts," having learned that some of her friends had become Christians. Under conviction, however, she kept quiet or ran out of the building at the meetings. Two weeks later, she and her husband gave their testimony about accepting Christ as Savior and Lord.

When other witches found out about the couple's newfound faith, they attended their baptisms intending to disrupt the service and "claim her back."

"They were greeted and welcomed by our people," Losasso said, "but they did not utter a word." Soon after the service, the witches set fire to an associate pastor's porch, but the one-time incident did not stop the congregation's witnessing.

"Two more witches have been saved and baptized since the first witch gave her testimony and was baptized," Losasso said. "There have been no more physical attacks by the witches, but, of course, a ton of spiritual warfare."

Witnessing to those who call themselves "witches" can be intimidating, but generally witches are scared of born-again believers, said Bill Gordon, interfaith evangelism associate with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board in Atlanta.

"It has been my experience that witches are normally more afraid of us than we are of them," he said. "Christians should never forget 1 John 4:4, 'The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.'"

"Witchcraft attracts many feminists because of its worship of the 'mother goddess,'" he said. "Middle- and upper-class females are attracted to it by the positive image portrayed on television shows and the movies."

"Many (witches) have significant personal problems," he said. "They hope witchcraft will help their situation. Share with them that faith in Jesus Christ is the only answer to the spiritual difficulties they face."

People need to hear from born-again believers how Jesus can make a positive change in a person's life, Gordon said.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Reaching out to Afghans



Boys in Sunday School



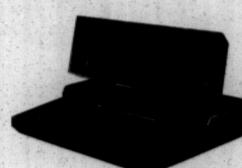
Sunday School lessons



Practical Principles



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It's not unusual today for a young woman to speak up and assert herself. From boardrooms to courtrooms to The White House, women are being heard in the marketplace of ideas. That's a good thing; it hasn't always been that way.

In a functioning republic, no one's voice is unimportant and no one's ideas are insignificant. That's one of the major reasons the Founding Fathers believed in freedom of speech so much that they enshrined it in the most important foundational document of this country: the Constitution.

Virtually all of us would agree that it's to our national benefit that any American can express a point of view. We may not agree with all those views and some ideas may be a little (or a lot) kooky, but it's a free country.

It's also to our national benefit that fully half the population feels freer each year to become more and more involved in the important dialogues that address important aspects of our everyday lives. Toward the improvement of our society and culture, women are to be commended for speaking up.

That is, unless you're the new Miss America and you want to be heard on a pair of the most politically incorrect topics of the day.

Such is the predicament in which Erika Harold, crowned Miss America in early September, finds herself. Her controversial topics that set off all the fireworks? Chastity and sexual abstinence until marriage.

Now, to us religious fanatics out here in the hinterlands who believe in and promote sexual abstinence until marriage — as well as sexual purity once married — and are teaching our children these important principles, that doesn't sound like such a radical platform for a Miss America to adopt.

After all, the widespread practice of chastity and sexual abstinence in America could only have positive results. Not many

sexually chaste young people suddenly find themselves unexpectedly staring at parenthood.

Not many sexually abstinent young people go to jail for killing their newborns, and not many young people who refrain from sexual relations before marriage have to hear the words, "Your venereal disease is incurable and has made you sterile/infertile for life."

Even young people agree. Programs such as True Love Waits, which asks young people to pledge sexual abstinence until marriage, have been wildly successful.

That's not good enough for the Miss America moguls, however, who pressured Harold not to talk about chastity and abstinence. Since pageant officials have refused all requests for comment and interviews, it is unclear why those topics are off limits for Harold except for their political incorrectness.

Harold, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Illinois who has been accepted to Harvard Law School, wasn't about to be bullied. "I've talked to thousands of young people on the issue of abstinence," she told The Illinois Leader, an online news service.

"It is very important that I continue to speak on this issue — the kids I spoke to need to know that I'm not abandoning this issue simply because I am now Miss America," Harold said.

With an implacable Harold standing

"MY CHURCH HAS ONLY
TWO THINGS TO SAY ABOUT
SEX: NO AND ABSOLUTELY NO!"



her ground and the weight of public opinion growing against them, pageant officials capitulated and offered a compromise that was agreeable to Harold. She'll be able to speak on chastity and sexual abstinence after all.

Three cheers are in order for Erika Harold, who took her principles and stood up to a system heavily stacked against her. We all owe her a note of thanks, and our prayers, as she continues to be a role model for the young women who hold the same values and will one day face similar pressures.

In the lingo of today's teens, "You go, girl!"

GUEST OPINION:

The raging war over values

By Claude Thomas, pastor
First Church, Euless, Texas

All people live by values, and values change in societies. In America today, a cultural war rages over opposing values.

In this collision, does one truth or one set of truths and values exist by which we can live? The Bible says quite clearly, "Yes!"

2 Peter 1:12-21 outlines the method by which we live by the truths outlined in Scripture. By establishing in our hearts the presence of an absolute, reliable and relevant truth as displayed in Scripture, we will experience guidance for direction in life.

Let's talk first about today's culture and environment. I want to do so by way of illustration. A few years ago a cartoon appeared in USA Today that captures society's belief about truth. The cartoon had a picture of a young George Washington holding a hatchet in one hand, kneeling next to a felled cherry tree. In the cartoon he is looking up at his father and saying, "Dad, my teacher says I cannot tell a lie, I cannot tell the truth, and I cannot tell the difference."

The cartoon is humorous in one sense, but in another sense, quite alarming. This type philosophy invades our lives and, unfortunately for many Christians, this philosophy is exactly what we are accepting in this present generation.

How did we arrive at this place in our American culture? Well, we have embraced a new kind of "tolerance." Now, let me hasten to state: All tolerance is not bad. In fact, when we look at tolerance, it's designed historically to provide us all religious freedom and provide that we will be punished by law if we go out and hurt someone else on the basis of disagreement over belief.

This has been taken in a way to give tolerance a completely new meaning. Some have come to believe that tolerance equals acceptance of and approval of belief systems different than your own. And that definition of tolerance equates to truth no longer being absolute but, rather, defined by the individual or community.

This is a wrong and destructive perspective. You see, toler-

ance has replaced truth for too many people today, but the new tolerance doesn't really play out all that well in practical life.

For example, when we look at music and musicians, we know that a conductor simply doesn't "tolerate" someone in the first violin chair playing on their own in spontaneity. Why? In an orchestra everything is set in order. One person playing to his or her own tune sets the whole orchestra in chaos.

Another example of destructive tolerance is simple mechanics. Years ago my brother-in-law and I rebuilt an engine. When we bored out the piston walls, we knew that these measurements had to be within one-thousandth of an inch. Any more or any less meant the engine wouldn't function properly. They had to be "true to size."

In a practical way, tolerance fails both in music and mechanics because it creates chaos. In today's culture, likewise, we are called to be philosophically tolerant in morality, ethics and in our family. Again, dismissing truth and accepting this new tolerance creates individual, family and societal chaos.

If the tolerance mantra does not practically work, then what is our alternative model by which to live? Well, the Bible teaches us to live by truth.

In 2 Peter 1:12-21, the apostle Peter wrote to a group of believers who lived in a world that had many beliefs about truth. In this passage, he reminded them the Scriptures were absolutely reliable and relevant truth by which they could base and live their lives.

As those Christians in that day lived their lives by the truth of Scripture, so should we.

To remind us of the validity of my argument, let's recite Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Let's embrace the truth of Scripture and live our lives by that truth.

Thomas, a regular columnist for Baptist Press, is the father of Eric Thomas, pastor of First Church, Vicksburg.

'Bone box' may have connection to Jesus

WASHINGTON (BP) — A limestone bone box dating to approximately 63 A.D. is being heralded as "the only New Testament-era mention of the central figure of Christianity," according to the Biblical Archaeology Review. It is "the first-ever archaeological discovery to corroborate biblical references to Jesus," the journal states.

The existence of the box, roughly 20 inches long, 10 inches wide, and 12 inches high, was announced Oct. 21 at a news conference in Washington, D.C.

It apparently once contained the bones of James, the brother of Jesus. An inscription on the box reads, "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus."

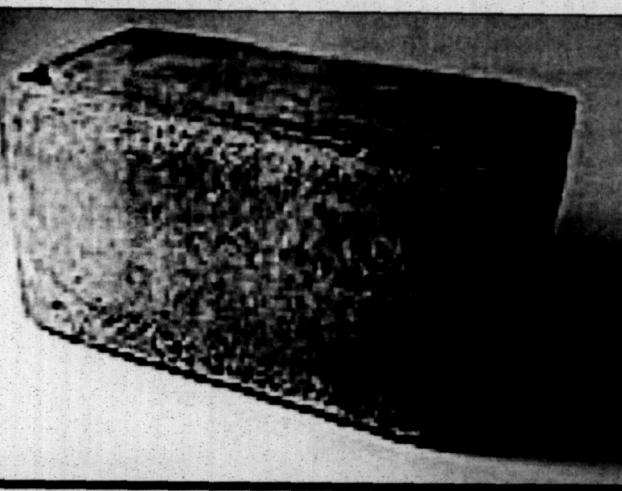
An extensive article about the limestone box, called an "ossuary," appears in the November-December issue of the Biblical Archaeology Review, published by the Washington-based Biblical Archaeology Society.

The article is titled, "Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus." The journal's website notes in part: "The family relationships contained on the new find helped experts ascertain that the inscription very likely refers to the biblical James, brother of Jesus (see, for example, Matthew 13:55-56 and Galatians 1:18-19). Although all three names were common in ancient times, the statistical probability of their appearing in that combination is extremely slim. In addition, the mention of a brother is unusual — indicating that this Jesus must have been a well-known figure."

Of the ossuary's authenticity, the website notes: Laboratory tests performed by the Geological Survey of Israel note

that the "thin sheen... that forms on stone and other materials over time... shows no trace of modern elements."

As stated in a letter from the Israeli agency, "No signs of the use of a modern tool or



MAJOR FIND — Called "the first-ever archaeological discovery to corroborate biblical references to Jesus," a limestone box that may have carried the bones of James, Jesus' brother, is the subject of an article in the Biblical Archaeology Review. (BP photo courtesy of the Biblical Archaeology Review)

instrument was [sic] found. No evidence that might detract from the authenticity of the [covering residue] and the inscription was found."

James has been widely regarded in Christian history not only as Jesus' brother, but as the leader of the church at Jerusalem once he became a believer in one of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances.

James also is widely regarded as the author of the New Testament Book of James. According to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, James was killed by Jewish authorities around A.D. 62.

The burial box of James was purchased about 15 years ago for \$700 or less by a private collector in Jerusalem who wishes to remain anonymous, according to

news reports. The collector was told it had been unearthed near the Mount of Olives.

The collector, a Jew, had no idea of its significance until a conversation last spring with Andre Lemaire, a specialist in ancient inscriptions at the Sorbonne University in Paris, who subsequently authored the Biblical Archaeology Review article.

"Like many ossuaries obtained on the antiquities market, it is empty," the journal's website notes. "Its history prior to its current ownership is not known."

Of the use of limestone boxes containing bones of the deceased, the website

states: "In the first century A.D., Jews followed the custom of transferring the bones of their deceased from burial caves to ossuaries. The practice was largely abandoned after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 A.D."

"No one knows for certain why the practice started or stopped, but it provides a rare period of self-documentation in which commoners as well as leaders left their names carved in stone."

The website also notes, "Ancient inscriptions are typically found on royal monuments or on lavish tombs, commemorating rulers and other official figures. But Jesus, who was raised by a carpenter, was a man of the people, so finding documentation of his family is doubly unexpected."

The inscription is in Aramaic, the common language among Jews of the first century.

Steven M. Ortiz, assistant professor of archaeology at New Orleans Seminary, told Baptist Press, "Based on initial reports, the find appears to be authentic. Dr. Lemaire is a

noted paleographer of distinction and is familiar with authenticating actual epigraphic finds and possible forgeries.

"This chance find is going to have a tremendous impact on New Testament scholarship," Ortiz stated. "This is not going to impact the scholarly community in regards to whether Jesus was an actual person, as most scholars acknowledge the historicity of Jesus."

"The find will have its greatest influence/impact on placing Jesus back in his first century B.C. Jewish context," he said, countering "a trend to interpret Jesus within a non-Jewish environment and reevaluate the nature of the Jewish Galilean community."

It also is important for the church because "it helps refocus the context of Jesus," Ortiz said. "There is a tendency to create Jesus in our 21st-century image. The church tends to



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THE
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Youth more conservative, or less?

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — On some political issues involving religion, America's youth seem to be more conservative than their elders but cheating, stealing, and lying by high school students has increased with alarming vigor, according to two separate studies. A report by the University of California at Berkeley's Survey Research Center says 59% of adults ages 27-59 want public schools to allow prayer at official school activities such as commencements while 69% of teenagers support school prayer. Thirty-four percent of adults support government restrictions of abortion, the report said, while about 44% of youths age 15-22 support such restrictions. Forty percent of adults registered support federal aid to faith-based charities, meanwhile, while 59% of college-aged youth and 67% of younger teens support such funding. "We were surprised by the greater support among young Americans for some aspects of the conservative cultural agenda," said Merrill Shanks, political science professor at UC Berkeley and one of the lead researchers for the study. Meanwhile, a recent report by the Josephson Institute of Ethics reports that students admitting they cheated on an exam at least once in the previous year jumped from 61% in 1992 to 74% in 2002; the number who stole something from a store within the year rose from 31% to 38%; and the percentage who admit they lied to their teachers and parents also increased significantly. The Josephson study also indicates alarming deterioration over the past two years. Cheating rose from 71% in 2000 to 74% in 2002; theft increased from 35% to 38%; and those who said they would be willing to lie to get a good job jumped from 28% to 39%.

Looking back

10 years ago

Incensed over Madonna's sex-saturated coffee table book, author-broadcaster James Dobson calls for a boycott of Time Warner Inc. Dobson says that the book "is, without question, the most outrageous single event that has occurred in my lifetime with reference to teenagers."

20 years ago

Trustees of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth approve the final steps of merger with the Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio. Southwestern has a record cumulative enrollment of 4,605 students.

50 years ago

W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Church, Dallas, and James W. Middleton, pastor of First Church, Shreveport, are the principal speakers at annual state Brotherhood Rally at First Church, Jackson. According to The Baptist Record, "The First Church of Dallas is the largest church for white people in the world."

Baptists helping to reach out to Afghans

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Americans who watched their military devastate Afghanistan could not help but feel sorry for the people of Afghanistan, whose country was being destroyed because of the Taliban regime's support for terrorism.



BUILDING BRIDGES — Staff members of Baptist Memorial Medical Center in Memphis demonstrate for members of a delegation from Afghanistan the functions of sophisticated patient monitoring equipment. The Memphis medical center is affiliated with the state Baptist conventions of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas. (BP photo)

Now, a year later, one American city has taken an important first step toward helping the people of Afghanistan rebuild their country. For five days in mid-October, community, church, and civic leaders in Memphis, Tenn., hosted seven officials of Afghanistan's interim government for summit meetings focused on the country's health, education, and leadership development needs.

"We felt Americans could

have a tangible impact on the future of a nation by bringing these Afghan government officials to Memphis and drawing a straight line between them and the people and resources of our city," said Mark Morris, chairman of International Friendship Summits, the non profit organization that arranged the Oct. 9-14 Memphis-Afghan Friendship Summit.

Morris, missions and ministries pastor at Germantown Church in suburban Memphis, was part of a team that visited Afghanistan in July to explore needs that citizens of Memphis

might be able to meet. They found government officials enthusiastic about their interest.

That enthusiasm was driven in part by the utter devastation war and drought have caused in Afghanistan — and in part by the international community's failure to keep its almost-year-old promise to help rebuild the nation.

More than two decades of war have left Afghanistan in ruins, Morris said. Schools,

hospitals, commercial, and industrial buildings and roads have been destroyed. More than 80% of the country's cattle, sheep, and goat herds are gone. Food production has been almost completely disrupted. Rebuilding the country will cost at least \$10 billion and perhaps as much as \$20 billion over the next five years.

The international community has pledged \$4.5 billion, and more than half of the pledges for this year have not been fulfilled.

"People in several churches in Memphis were deeply moved by the plight of people in Afghanistan," summit coordinator Rusty Griffin said. "They were disturbed by the failure of the international community to help Afghanistan begin rebuilding."

"They felt God was leading them to see if they could make a difference."

Members of the Afghan delegation, led by Zabiullah Asmatay, deputy minister of health, and Haron Amin, deputy chief of mission of the Afghan Embassy in Washington, D.C., spent two days in consultations with leaders of Memphis' health, education, and business communities.

"We highly appreciate the strong support the people of Memphis have shown for helping us rebuild our country," Ferouzudeen Ferouz, deputy minister of Afghanistan's Department of Health, told a group at Baptist Memorial Medical Center. "We believe we will learn a lot from you to help us with the reconstruction of our health care system."

Ferouz and two other health ministry delegates toured the Baptist hospital, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, the Regional Medical Center at Memphis, St. Francis Hospital, the Memphis-Shelby County Health Department's Hollywood Clinic, Christ Community Medical Center, and other health facilities in the area.

Baptist Memorial Medical Center is affiliated with the state Baptist conventions of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

Their discussions with community leaders focused on ways Memphis can help meet some of Afghanistan's urgent needs.

Ferouz shared some frightening statistics with health summit participants: Afghanistan has the highest infant mortality rate in the world, 92% of its pregnant women are chronically malnourished, only 10% of the country's 25 million people have safe drinking water, 80% of its health care facilities have been destroyed.

"We need a strategy for rebuilding our healthcare infrastructure, reducing childhood, infant and maternal mortality rates and immunizing our people for infectious diseases related to sanitation and drinking water issues," he said. "We want to look at ways organizations in the United States can assist us in our rebuilding effort."

Members of the Afghan education delegation held similar discussions with officials of Memphis public schools, the University of Memphis, Crichton College, and other institutions about the needs.

Hunger expert: needs remain constant all year long

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — While the October 13 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) World Hunger Sunday has passed on the denominational calendar, that doesn't mean churches should shelve their efforts to aid the hungry for another year, Steve Nelson insists.



HUNGER FIGHTERS — Members of the Christian rock band The Swift (from left) Chris Byers, Britt Edwards, Mike Simons, and Trae Drose have a heart for ministry to those in need of food and a Savior as they promote the World Hunger Fund in their concerts. (BP photo)

"The needs of the poor don't disappear just because their cause isn't featured on an upcoming Sunday on the calendar," said Nelson, director of hunger concerns for the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "Men and women and boys and girls are in need 365 days a year and our faith commands us to care for them," he said, noting that the winter months ahead merely exacerbate the poor's plight in many parts of the world, including the U.S.

"Southern Baptist missionaries are in the field — internationally and nationally — serving those who need help," Nelson said. When giving to the World Hunger Fund drops off, he said, so does the ability of the missionaries to continue their Christ-based food and relief ministries.

World Hunger Sunday is designed to awaken Southern Baptists and others to the need to give so that those in need can receive assistance and hear the gospel, he continued.

"The poor are with us always," Nelson said, referring to Christ's words in Matthew 26. "The only way our feeding and agricultural ministries can be

effective is for Southern Baptists and others to display a pattern of regular systematic giving to the World Hunger Fund where you can be assured that 100% of your gift reaches those in need."

Nelson views the World Hunger Sunday on the calendar as a kickoff for the next 12 months of giving to the fund. This year he challenged churches to extend their efforts to promote the hunger fund beyond a mere mention in the Sunday morning bulletin, challenging churches to hold a BEAT Hunger Weekend.

With promotional support from the cooperating ministries of Woman's Missionary Union, LifeWay Christian Resources and the North American Mission Board's Royal Ambassadors, hundreds of churches across the nation responded to Nelson's challenge — many spotlighting the SBC's hunger efforts for the first time.

"Unfortunately ministry to the poor is little more than a footnote in most churches' ministry plan," Nelson lamented. If every Southern Baptist gave just one dollar per month, gifts to the hunger fund would grow

20-fold, he said.

Nelson is making a special effort to introduce teenagers to the Southern Baptists' hunger and relief work around the world, hosting a BEAT Hunger Weekend celebration aimed at teens at First Church of Hendersonville, Tenn. on Oct. 12.

The highlight of the event was a concert by The Swift, a contemporary Christian band on the Flicker Records label. More than a year ago, the band began plugging the World Hunger Fund at each of its concerts and discovered teenage concertgoers were more than willing to support it.

"It's hard to be a Christian and not care," band member Britt Edwards said of the group's interest in the World Hunger Fund.

"It's my belief that as Christians we are pocketing the resources God is giving us to help those in need," Edwards said. "It is our responsibility to care for those in need."

For more information on the World Hunger Fund and aiding vital hunger and relief efforts around the world, call (800) 475-9127 or visit www.worldhungerfund.com.

Marler: SS teachers 'lucky' for boys in class

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — If you've ever taught a Sunday School class full of little boys, you know they're made of more than snakes and snails and puppy dog tails. They also have a keen sense of adventure, a flair for mischief, a dash of curiosity, and lots of energy.

If you have them in your Sunday School class at all, count yourself lucky, said Jan Marler, childhood ministries specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources.

Since 1981, boys have spent 71% less time in church compared with girls at 25% less time, according to a report in American Demographics magazine, Marler pointed out.

Marler and her husband Ken, adult growth specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, led a "Don't Lose the Boys" conference during the National Preschool/ Children's Convention Oct. 14-17 in Nashville.

Boys are six times more likely to have a learning disorder, three times more likely to be drug addicts in life, and 12 times more likely to commit murder, she said the report revealed. Males make up 80% of suicides under age 20, and 90% of people in drug treatment programs are men, she said.

"We've lost a generation of boys," she said.

The Marlers, who have four girls, said they learned quickly that boys learn "in a very different way from girls" when

they began leading a TeamKID class at their church.

"Boys are very visual learners," she said. "So, if a boy hits a girl in your Sunday School class, it doesn't do a lot of good to say, 'Johnny, you hurt Cindy, and you need to apologize.' What you have to do is show him the bruise, and say this is what happens when you hit people."

Because boys tend to learn visually, incorporating pictures, role-playing, and concrete examples into lessons helps them to learn more easily, she said. When disciplining boys, a visual form of punishment, like taking away privileges or toys, is often effective.

Because boys also respond to a deep, stern voice, enlisting a male teacher is helpful, she said.

"Sometimes women need to enlist men to help with discipline," Marler said. "Boys often respond better to men. The male teacher should be stern, but loving. He needs to be a spiritual role model, not just a Sunday School bouncer."

Because boys come into the classroom "raring to go, teachers should have a plan of action," Ken Marler said. "You can't just tell them to hush and sit down. That's not how they work."

The key to channeling their energy is through diversion and distraction, he said. "When you have a two-year-old, the way you keep him is happy is to keep him distracted," he said.

"It's the same with older boys, but don't distract in the same way every week. When they figure you out, they're already two steps ahead of you."

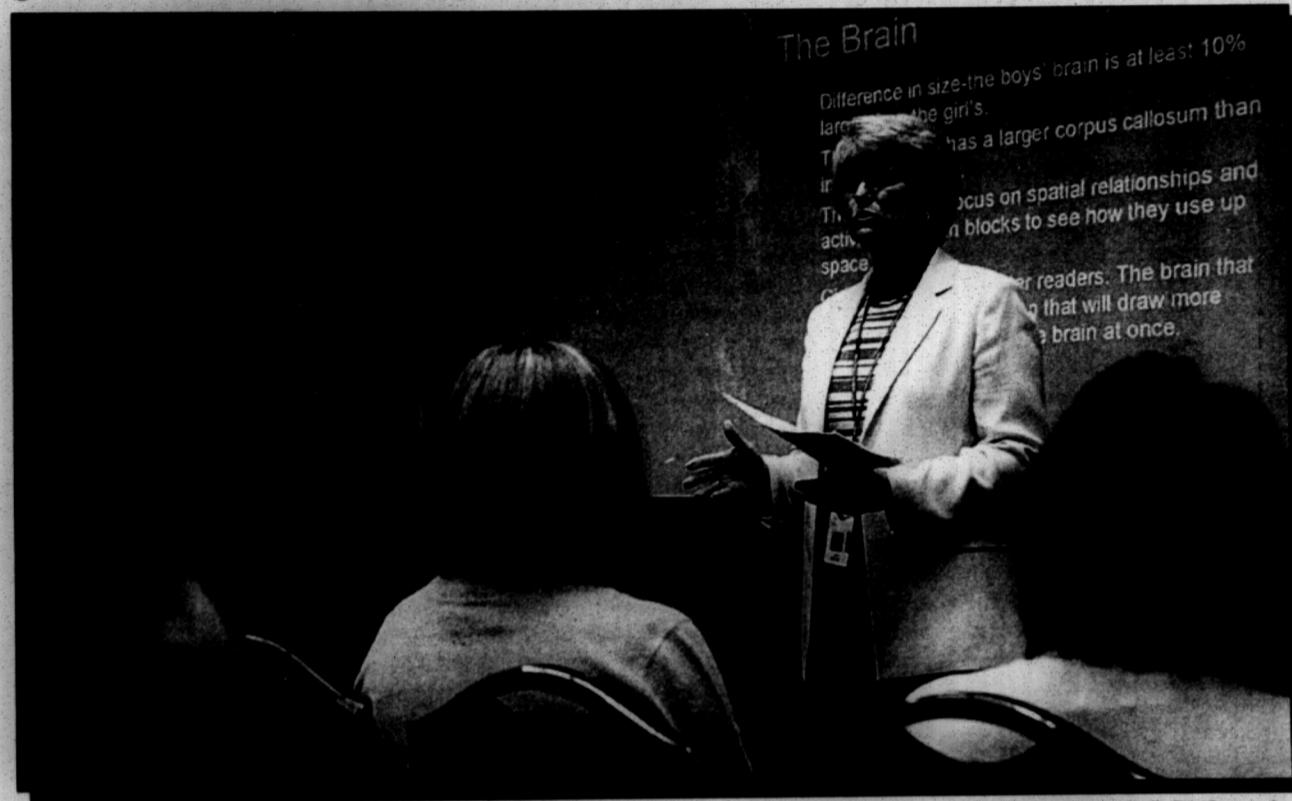
Jan Marler suggested using games whenever possible.

"Games can communicate to children on a different level," she said. "If you find new ways to communicate the truths of the Bible, they will remember those truths."

Ken Marler warned against games with winners and losers.

Boys are competitive, he said, so games must be played in ways that everybody wins, and everybody holds an important role.

The Marlers stressed unconditional love and acceptance when dealing with boys. "It's so hard to tell what kind of home life they're coming from," Ken Marler said. "This may be the only love some of these kids are getting. If we show them the love of Christ, we can save the next generation of boys."



BUILDING UP BOYS — Jan Marler (standing), childhood ministries specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, and her husband Ken, adult growth specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, led a "Don't Lose the Boys" conference during the National Preschool/Children's Convention. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

HUG DAY

Every stage and phase of life is filled with celebrations if you just watch for them. In the fall of 2002, we came to a new phase and celebration in my family as the oldest grandchild headed off to the first grade. It was an exciting week because not only did Madi start first grade, but my oldest grandson, Trey, began his kindergarten adventure — all in the same week!

Now, I must confess to you that numerous times during that week my mind drifted off to thoughts of these two grandchildren. I wondered how Trey was doing in his new environment and realizing the seriousness of being in the first grade (where real school begins), I wondered how Madi was doing. Of course, knowing that both of them have received excellent DNA from a superior gene pool, I was confident that they would do all right. Yet, you know how it is: sometimes these kids get bad teachers that just don't seem to recognize how smart our grandchildren really are.

Well, after a few days, I learned that everything had just gone magnificently well, and it was obvious to me that they were learning at warp speed! Why, already Trey (the kindergarten star) was meticu-



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

lously writing out his letters and Madi (the first grade whiz) was reading books and having spelling tests.

Over the first weekend, grandma and grandpa were getting, in capsule form, what had gone on with Madi her first week of school life. We were all sitting around critiquing everything from the classes Madi was taking, to the food that she was getting to eat. I learned that one day at school was Pizza Day and another was Taco Day, Madi's mom was trying to remember what day that particular Friday was and Madi's eyes lit up and she said, "Friday is 'Hug Day.'" "What?" we all asked. "It's 'Hug Day,'" she replied. "What in the world is 'Hug Day?'" was our response. "Well, everybody that wants to get a hug from Mrs. Mose can line up on Friday and she will give you a hug if you need one." We inquired, "Did you get in line and get a hug?" With a big grin, Madi shook her head up and down and said,

"Yes, yes!" Seeing the glow in her little eyes, I began thinking, "What awesome power there is in a simple hug!"

As the Apostle Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote these words, "greet the brother with a holy kiss," certainly God knew that we all would benefit from a caring touch. In a culture where genuine affection would be shown by a kiss on the cheek, these expressions, among a fellowship of believers, would be a point of encouragement meeting after meeting. While our caring expressions may take on slightly different forms such as a genuine handshake, or a hug, or an arm around a shoulder, they are healthy and helpful when given appropriately.

Years ago, at a church where I was pastor, a man came to me with what he thought was a serious and severe complaint. He expressed that he did not like the fact that when our church family welcomed visitors, we did so by standing,

shaking hands, and greeting one another with a word and an expression of kindness. He wanted me to know that if he wanted to say hello to somebody, he would do it and I didn't have to tell him. I understood that, but on the other hand, on that same day, a precious lady who had no family other than her church family, came to me and thanked me. She expressed her gratitude for the time we set aside in the worship service to greet each other, shake hands, and even, occasionally, to be hugged by someone. According to her those moments on Sunday mornings were usually the only time in the week where she felt the warmth of another person's handshake, or pat on the back, or hug. She was aging, frail, and isolated, so for her Sunday morning was a special "Hug" day.

Probably there are some of you who cannot relate to this kind of a need in your life. In fact, some of you are so loved, hugged, squeezed, and hovered over, that you feel smothered. But, I would like to point out to you that although you may not need a "Hug" day — you may be needed to give a hug! So, go on to church and be a part of the fellowship time and the hugs, and I'm confident that the Lord will bless you, whether you give a hug or just receive one.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

MADD to host Gospel Sing on Nov. 9

The Mississippi chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) will host a Gospel Sing on at 6 p.m. on November 9 at Southfork fish House on Highway 49 North in Magee.

Scheduled to appear are Hosanna, Gloryland Quartet, Kenny and Harriet Robbins, Mildred McCollum, and Hubert Greer.

For ticket information, contact MADD at (800) 368-6233.

Mission Friends of First Church, Vancleave



Ken Regan, Donald & Kim Sabella



Spring Hill Church, Hazlehurst, honored Hughrene James and Ruby Chadwick on Oct. 7. James has been the missions director and taught Sunday School for 61 years. Chadwick was welcomed back after extended time in New Orleans, La.

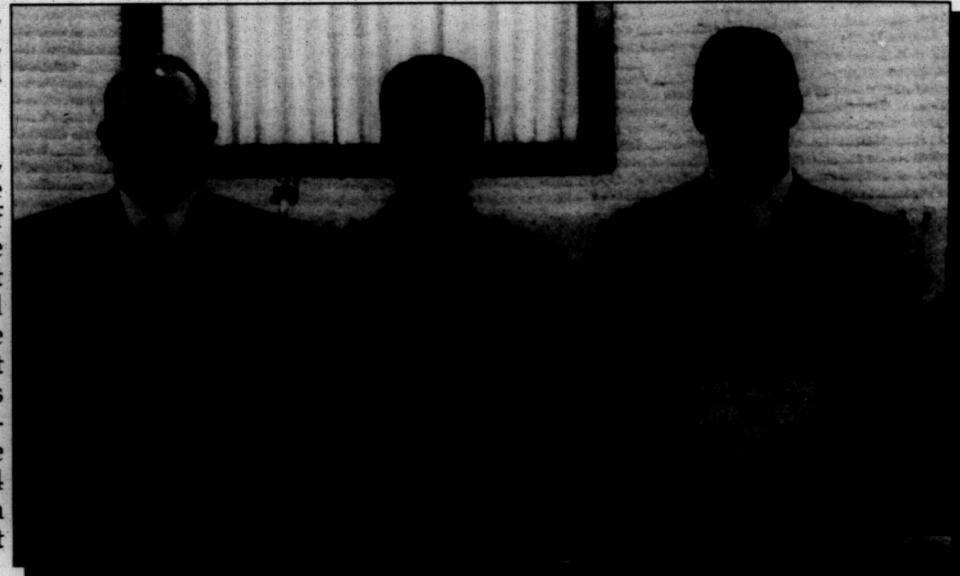
Donald Sabella was ordained a deacon at Heritage Heights Church, Laurel, on Sept. 29. Pictured (from left) are Ken Regan, pastor, Sabella, and his wife, Kim.

First Church, Vancleave, held a deacon ordination on Oct. 6. Pictured (from left) are Terry Shows, his wife Brandi, Drew Ford, his wife Banita, Christi Foil, her husband Jeff, and Greg Potts, pastor.

Oakhurst Church Deacon Ordination, Clarksdale

Oakhurst Church, Clarksdale, held a deacon ordination on Oct. 6. Pictured (from left) are Jeff Holland, pastor, Donald Whitmire, Eddie Ellis, and Hal Moore.

Ernest K. Sadler, Secretary for the National Directors of Missions for the Southern Baptist Convention and Second Vice President for the Mississippi Baptist Convention, has announced his retirement. A reception will be held Nov. 24 from 2-4 p.m. at the Jackson County Baptist Associational Office.



McGee, Williams, and Dailey



Deacon Ordination Service of First Church, Vancleave

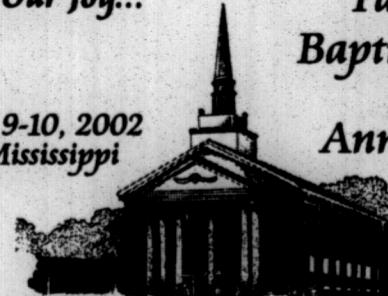


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STAFF CHANGES

Parkway Church, Pascagoula, called **Coy Rice** as Music & Youth Minister. Rice attends Southeastern Bible College.

Rice

New Hope Church, Foxworth, has called **Lars Stensland III** as Youth Minister.

Gene Fant has retired as pastor of Center Terrace Church, Canton. He will continue his ministry by serving as supply and in revivals. He can be reached at (601) 925-5116.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

First Church, Grenada, will hold their annual women's conference, Joy in the Journey, on Jan. 17 and 18. Rhea Briscoe, Elmbrook Church, Brookfield, Wis., will be speaking. For registration information, call (662) 226-3661.

First Church, Water Valley, will be hosting a Womens Conference Nov. 8 and 9, beginning at 5:30 p.m., Fri., and 7:30 a.m., Sat. The theme will be Sitting at the Feet of Jesus: How to be a Mary in a Marthas World. Page Hughes, Anchor Deep Ministries, will be speaking and Jammy Berry Williams will bring special music. Registration is \$15. For more information, call (662) 473-2230.

The WMU of First Church, Sand Hill, presented the Margaret Lackey Missions Program, raising \$968. They had a Mississippi Missions Supper on Sep. 29 and will present the Lottie Moon Mission Nov.-Dec. Pictured (from left) are Emma Freeman, Linda Henderson, Marilyn Walley, Eddie Lee Harlon, Etheleen Shattles, Midge Broome, Sally James, Ina Kittrell, and Connie Walley.

The GA's, RA's, and Mission Friends of First Church,



Briscoe

Houston, were recognized for their mission studies and raising money for support. They had several fundraisers over the year, including the use of money banks, for Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offerings.

Diamondhead Church, Diamondhead, held a prayer dedication of their building site as well as their homecoming on Sep. 22.

Campground Community Church, Pontotoc, was voted into the Pontotoc Association on Oct. 17. Harold K. Russell is pastor.

Goss Church, Columbia, will be a relay center for Operation Christmas Child. Shoe boxes should be brought to 20 Goss Church Drive, Nov. 18-24, from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. For more information, call (601) 736-9563.

First Church, Columbus, will be hosting Duane and Iris Blue, Mission Service Corps volunteers for North American Mission Board, on Nov. 6 at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (662) 328-3915.

Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, will be hosting a community sing on Nov. 16 at 6 p.m.

featuring Elite. For more information, call (662) 895-2661.

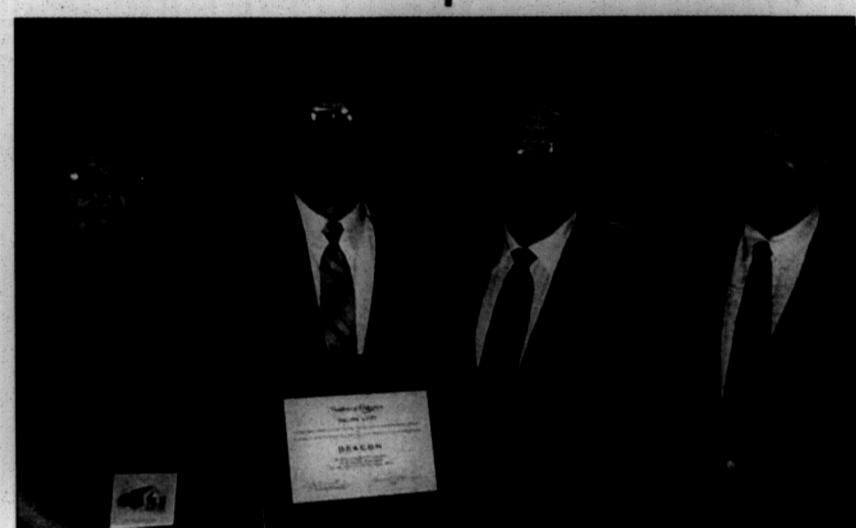
The student ministry of **Crossgates Church, Brandon,** will host Afterlife, a Halloween alternative, at the Net, Crossgates Village Shopping Center, on Oct. 31. This event is free and doors open at 6 p.m. For more information, call (601) 825-6357.

Ralph L. Lott was ordained as a deacon, Edwards Church, Edwards, on Oct. 13. Pictured (from left) are Brenda and Ralph Lott, Russell McIntire, pastor, and Billy Smith.

Fred Wolfe will join the staff of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, on Nov. 3 as interim pastor. He will preach in all Sunday services, as well as providing leadership and counsel as needed.

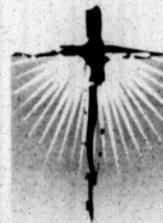


WMU of Sand Hill Church, Sand Hill



Brenda & Ralph Lott, Russell McIntire, and Billy Smith

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



Gardner-Webb president resigns amid scandal

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (ABP) — Embattled Gardner-Webb University President Chris White resigned his position effective October 25 at the Baptist-affiliated school in North Carolina, several weeks after his personal involvement in a student athlete grading scandal was revealed.

White had been under fire since news broke that he had told the school's registrar two years earlier to recalculate a star basketball player's grade point average. The change made Carlos Webb eligible to play on the basketball team, which won the National Christian

Collegiate Athletic Association championship that year.

Some faculty members, trustees, alumni and students had called for White's resignation. The school's faculty gave White a 63-39 vote of no confidence the day his action was revealed in a local newspaper. The school's board of trustees, meanwhile, publicly affirmed his leadership while reportedly reprimanding him in private.

In his resignation letter, White called the move "the most wrenching decision" he has ever made. "For reasons I find hard to understand and even more difficult to articu-

late, the situation has reached the point where the integrity of the institution and all that it represents is in jeopardy," he said. "I am sorry that what I did two years ago out of fairness to a student has led to such turmoil and controversy. But what causes me even more sorrow is that the harm of the past few weeks has been self-inflicted by men and women of the Gardner-Webb community to the detriment of our students whom we are here to serve, inspire and educate in accordance with Christian values."

Trustee chairman Tommy Hardin said White's decision

was his own. "This decision was not requested by the board," he said in a written statement.

Hardin said White chose to step aside so the "unrest" on campus would end.

"Although the recent controversy began on campus, it has mushroomed into a statewide issue and beyond that has harmed the reputation of both Dr. White and Gardner-Webb University," Hardin said. "Everyone associated with the university has been tainted by the unfortunate events that, quite frankly, have gotten out of hand."

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Halloween 'trick or tract' idea catching on

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — It's Oct. 31, and porch lights on virtually every other house on your street are shining. Nearby trees are decorated with strings of lighted jack-o'-lanterns and ghosts made of old sheets swaying in the breeze.

Many of those other houses' doors are decorated with either a green-faced witch bearing a snaggle tooth grin or a hissing black cat with its back arched and muscles tensed in a pouncing posture.

As a Christian, however, you don't have your porch light on. Even the lights inside your home are dimmed in hopes that the kids in the neighborhood won't realize you're home.

"No trick-or-treating here," you mutter as you peer out through the shuttered windows.

The scenario above may be an exaggeration, but every year, Christians do face the dilemma of how to deal with the onslaught of images produced in conjunction with the public's fascination with Halloween.

What seems like harmless fun to many people — especially the children who don often ghoulish costumes and walk their neighborhood to collect as much candy as possible — actually is an opportunity for many to release their "dark side."

Popular entertainment, such as television programs Buffy:

The Vampire Slayer and Sabrina, the Teenage Witch, make occult themes and witchcraft seem fun and acceptable. As a result, Halloween has become strongly associated with the occult and a preoccupation with the dead, two influences against which Scripture and the church have always warned.

The Bible instructs believers to be in the world, but not of the world. Halloween provides a perfect chance for them to do just that, not just to hide behind a shuttered window in their darkened home waiting for the "evil" to pass.

Jimmy Kinnaird, head of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's church outreach team, said Halloween is a prime opportunity for Christians to do some personal evangelistic outreach.

"Most churches have a carnival or fall festival that kids can wear costumes to, and they usually let the kids dress up as Bible characters or something not evil or wicked," he said.

Individual Christians can take an active role at home on Halloween, tapping in to the flow of children who knock on their door.

Kinnaird said alternatives to just handing out candy to trick-or-treaters include gospel tracts. In fact, his three children are looking forward this year to sharing the Gospel with the families in their neighborhood at the same time they are filling their own sacks with goodies.

"The idea of giving out tracts at Halloween isn't a new one,

and this is something that individual families can do from their own homes," Kinnaird

"She said, 'Will you let me go trick or treating if I give out a tract at each house I go to?' Well, I had to say yes," Kinnaird said.

It worked so well for Jenna that her 11-year-old brother Daniel and 5-year-old sister Rachel are joining in on the fun this year.

"All three of them are going to do it this year," Kinnaird said, but either my wife, Karen, or I will accompany them on their rounds. Meanwhile, the other of us will pass out tracts at home as we greet trick-or-treaters at our door."

The Kinnairds use a specially designed package of 31 colorful Halloween tracts designed by the American Tract Society (ATS). ATS has been producing evangelistic resources for 177 years, introducing its "31 Halloween Pack" last year.

"The kids will look at the tract when they get home and dump the contents of their sack on the table or floor to check out what they got," Kinnaird said. "The tracts are very colorful and attractive, and they have a great message and lead in to the Gospel and message of Christ."

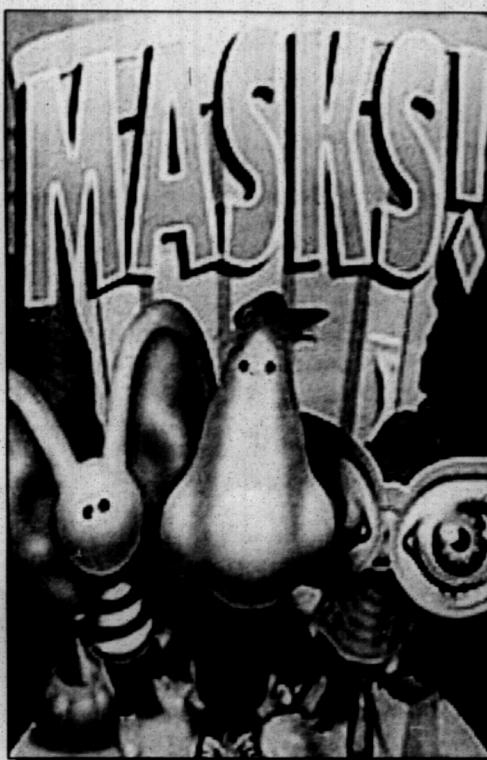
The ATS package includes three different designs, one featuring Masks! — a common element of the Halloween observance — and the other two, Bag of Jokes and Here's A Treat, which contain several "corny" jokes.

"Kids love corny jokes," Kinnaird said, "and these tracts are funny but at the end of each tract, readers learn that sin is no laughing matter."

"The kids see that Jesus is the only answer to their sin and is the way to forgiveness and eternal life in heaven."

The 31st tract in the ATS package is an informational piece, giving the history of Halloween, pointing out that evil is real and that Satan has a certain amount of power, yet also revealing that God loves mankind so much that he sent his only Son to die for their sins.

Kinnaird encouraged Christians to take an active part in Halloween to help offset its evil influence. "Halloween is not a time for Christians to hide behind a closed door," he said, "and it's fine to give your kids tracts and other Gospel-sharing items to hand out, but never let them go out on their own."



Letter to the Editor

Editor:

Tropical Storm Isidore moved ashore near Grand Isle, La., early on September 26 and as a result, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly experienced approximately 18 inches of flooding on the first floor of our main building. This surge was the highest since 1969 when Hurricane Camille hit. Isidore affected our Lobby, Multipurpose Room, adult and children's classrooms, maintenance shop, as well as, our bookstore. The surge also damaged several pumps, the pool equipment room, and the fence and piping along our property line. The beach was littered with debris and garbage washed up during the storm.

On Thursday, September 26, I called Barri Shirley, Associate Executive Director Business Services, and gave him an initial report of damages. He was able to contact Jim Didlake, Men's Ministry Director, and arrange for the Disaster Relief task force and many Disaster Relief volunteers to come to our aid early Friday morning. They spent the weekend removing furniture, pressure washing floors, and cleaning. They gave of themselves and their weekend to help us repair our facilities.

Approximately fifty people were involved in the cleanup efforts. The support and hard work of these folks did not go unnoticed as they gave of themselves to help get things cleaned up and ready to host groups. Gulfshore was fortunate that Hurricane Lili did not inflict any additional damage and we were able to host the state WMU conference this past Friday.

Thanks again for all of the volunteers who worked long and hard in our recovery efforts.

Frank Simmons, Manager
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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Everyone Needs Salvation

Romans 1:14 - 20; 2:17 - 24

By Gene Neal

A thorough study of the Old Testament and the covenants between God and man should clearly teach us that God has a plan for mankind, a plan that has been building through the ages like a great crescendo in a song. The plan was realized in the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and the new covenant that He offers every person on earth. Over the years we have adopted certain words to describe this covenant relationship such as "saved, lost, born again" and so forth. Some think these words are intimidating and insulting so they have quit using them. To fully grasp this new covenant of Christ, however, we must accept certain truths regardless



Neal

of the words we use. For instance, all people are eternally lost (separated from God) unless

they have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul understood this and gave us a lifetime of lessons in the book of Romans. He began his letter to the church in Rome by addressing the issue that all people have a personal stake in this new covenant of Christ.

Paul used an interesting word in Romans 1:14 when he said that he was "obligated" to various people. The King James Version translated the word "debtor" which carries the same basic meaning. Most Bible students know that Paul was the unique apostle to the Gentiles, appointed by God. Because of this, Paul was oblig-

ated to take the message of Christ to these people, but there was more. If we were to study the historical period of Rome when Paul wrote this letter we would discover that this was a pagan, immoral, selfish people who thrived on excess as they grasped for satisfaction and purpose. (Sound familiar? Possibly like our nation - our time?) Paul was obligated to share God's truth and Christ's love with them out of a moral Christian duty. We are appalled to hear stories of people who watch a person being beaten by thieves or muggers and do nothing to help. We would certainly condemn anyone who stood by and watched a person drown if there was anything they could do to help. Most people feel obligated to help the one who is in grave danger. This is exactly what Paul meant when he said he was obligated. These people needed help and he had the

answer for them!

Notice the people to whom he was obligated. Greeks and non-Greeks! Doesn't that just about cover everyone? Paul is saying (to them and to us!) that ALL people are in grave danger, all are drowning, all are in need of Jesus Christ, and all need to be saved. A very real danger for Christians is to forget that people who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord are lost and bound for hell. We don't like to talk about this but it is reality. In many cases, these are people we care about and relate to at work, at school, and even at home. They are not just "unchurched" as we like to call them. They are lost! Great is the obligation of the saved to reach out to the lost - all the lost. We can do this by sharing our personal story with a friend, inviting a neighbor to church, explaining the plan of salvation to a child, or supporting our missionaries and missions offerings. However we do it, the obligation is just as real for us as it was for Paul.

We should be careful to notice the rest of Paul's obligation. He was not only obligated to tell them, but was obligated to tell them the truth. In Romans 2:17-24 he pointed out several things that people in that day depended on for righteousness. Again, we can relate to this kind of errant thinking as many today consider themselves Christian because they are Americans or because they have Christian parents. Many today refer to church membership, baptism, confirmation, or some other church ritual as proof of their salvation. Again, we are obligated to tell people the truth.

Pretend for a moment that you are driving toward a bridge. A man leaps in front of you forcing you to hit the brakes. He then tells you that the bridge is unstable and will not support your car. He did what was right and you are grateful. We, too, are obligated to tell the world!

Neal is the pastor of First Church, Quitman.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Be Changed

John 9

By Ginger M. Caughman

In my mind's eye I can still see Mr. Kendrick coming for weekly groceries led by his seeing-eye dog. As a child helping in our family store "J. P. Morris and Sons," I was impressed when Mr. Kendrick opened his wallet and gave me the correct amount of money. He joked that he could tell a \$1 from a \$10 or \$20 or any other denomination of currency. I thought that he could tell the difference. Only years later my mother told me that his wife arranged the bills in his wallet so he could spend money as he walked about our town independently. I thought him courageous then and still admire blind people today. This lesson is about physical and spiritual darkness and light.

1. Change Is God's Work. Read John 9:1-7. The physically



Caughman

blind during Biblical times had a very different life from today. Physical blindness was very common. The suffering of the blind person was made worse by the common belief that the affliction was due to sin" (vv. 1-3). (Holman Bible Dictionary). Jesus had compassion and healed many blind people during His earthly ministry. In today's Scripture He performs a sign of the work of God by healing a man born blind. Jesus denies that the man's blindness resulted from sin. Jesus gave the blind man sight and later salvation! The formerly blind man was dramatically changed!

When Jesus changes us we live a different life. Are you changed by real life in Christ? Our Bible study this week challenges us to be Christ-centered not self-centered. Jesus does

God's work in the lives of those who will allow Him to work.

2. Salvation Is Needed. Read John 9:28-34. There were many questions from the people concerning the healing of the blind man and various opinions and much discussion about Jesus. Their understanding of the term 'sinner' (vv. 24, 25, and 31) referred to one who did not keep the law as the Pharisees interpreted it (v. 16), not necessarily to one without a saving relationship with God. The man's statement about God's not listening to sinners represents what he and the Pharisees believed, not what the New Testament teaches. Though they did not realize it, the Pharisees were like the man whom they condemned and threw out of the synagogue. The Pharisees were in spiritual darkness, sinners in need of salvation.

3. Salvation Is Available. Read John 9:35-37. Jesus invited the man who had received his sight to believe in Him. Salvation comes to those who

place their faith in Jesus. Lifeway calls this lesson evangelistic and indeed it is, but I believe every chapter in John is evangelistic for they all point to our Savior. Do you know someone receptive for salvation? Have you accepted Christ Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Salvation is available today.

4. Salvation Produces Change. Read John 9:38-39. The healed man was ready for salvation. As soon as he learned who Jesus was, he believed. A key verse in this chapter (v. 38): "And he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped Jesus." As a result of being saved the man who received his sight worshipped Jesus. Salvation gives a new focus to the lives of those who are saved. The changed man was a man of faith.

Our application is throughout the lesson. Do you know the Light personally? Jesus had said, "While I am in the world I am the light of the world" (v.5). Jesus had previously declared "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

This promise is true for us.

Helen Keller's eloquent writings have taught us much about life from the perspective of a person without physical sight. "It is faith which lights us into sustaining realities beyond those perceived by the physical senses," she wrote. Blind and deaf at age nineteen months, Helen Adams Keller (1880-1968) later inspired the world with her achievements. Her courageous life and faith in God continue to inspire. "The word of God came unto me, sitting alone among the multitudes; my blind eyes were touched with light."

When Jesus saves us, He changes our lives. Are you in spiritual darkness or spiritual light? Jesus has changed Christians to "Show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light!" (Read 1 Peter 2:9 KJV). Live a changed life in His wonderful light!

Caughman is a member of First Church Magee.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,

THE BAPTIST Record

no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES



Christian Living

Volume 2

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Issue 9

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: No One Deserves This

by Jimmy Porter

Police arrested John at the tattoo parlor where he had just branded into his flesh the names of his two daughters---dead daughters whom he had allegedly shot. He had been denied access to their mother and responded with violence and murder.



Porter

John Battaglia, a 45-year-old CPA, was thought to be a devoted family man but court records revealed that he had severely beaten two wives, one of whom had been beaten to the point of unconsciousness.

Police had prepared an arrest warrant for Mr. Battaglia for harassing his wife, Pearle, but had not yet served it before the fateful evening of the shootings. He still had unsupervised visitation rights with nine-year-old Faith and six-year-old Liberty.

During a phone conversation with her mother, one of the daughters asked her why she was trying to have their father arrested. She then screamed, "No, Daddy, no!" There were multiple gunshots and then silence. A director of the shelter for domestic violence victims said, "This is the ultimate act of revenge."¹

If this were the only case of domestic violence in the United States in the span of a year, it would be horrendous enough but it's not. A recent newspaper article read "Women killed by men highest in Mississippi."² The article stated that Mississippi ranked first in the United States in 2000---a leap from the previous year's ranking of 21st. In 2000, across our nation 1,805 females were killed by males in single victims and single offender incidents. Thousands and thousands of others were battered and beaten.

The national homicide rate among female victims killed by males in single

offender incidents in 2000 was 1.34 women per 100,000. The rate in Mississippi was 2.72 per 100,000---twice the national average. The study shows that half of the 40 homicides in Mississippi occurred during an argument; 24 women were killed with guns, mainly handguns.

Other factors also contribute to domestic violence. Adams County Sheriff Tommy Ferrell said, "Drugs and alcohol are directly involved in most domestic violence calls." Every day in Mississippi hundreds of women and children are suffering because of an abusive husband and father.

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of violent and coercive behavior exercised by one adult in an intimate relationship over another. It is not a "lovers quarrel," "marital conflict," or a "private family matter." Ninety-five percent of domestic violence victims are women, although men may also be victims.

There are four basic types of domestic

friends, verbal and emotional abuse, threats, intimidation, and control over where the partner can go and what they can do are all defined as psychological abuse. It is not uncommon for an abusive partner to destroy property which may include household objects or treasured objects belonging to the victim. Sometimes they will even abuse or kill beloved pets.³

How common is domestic violence? Surveys indicate that domestic violence occurs in 28 percent of all marriages. Others suggest that one out of every three women that you meet have been or are being abused. Since most domestic violence incidents go unreported, these estimates are too low.

Many theories have been suggested as to why men batter women, but the basic reason is that violence is an effective method for gaining and keeping control over another person. The offender usually does not suffer adverse consequences because historically violence against women has not been treated as a "real" crime.⁴

A batterer is often seen as a "regular guy." He is one of the "good ole boys" just taking care of his family. But the bottom line is that he is a criminal who needs to be stopped and given the needed help to overcome his violent behavior.

An offender can come from all groups and backgrounds and from all personality profiles. Listed below are some of the characteristics that fit a general profile of a batterer:

- He objectifies women. He sees them as property or sexual objects, not as people.

- He has low self-esteem and feels inadequate in the world even though he may

appear to be quite successful.

- He blames his violence on external circumstances

gregations designate a day or month to educate and motivate their members to become a part of the solution. You can support financially any domestic violence shelter that services your community. There are qualified persons who can come and present an interesting and informative program to your congregation.

God created us in his own image. Therefore, to abuse that which God has created is to abuse not only man's laws but God's. May we all become more sensitive to this tragedy called domestic violence and then seek ways to minister to those in need. Pray for those who have been or are being abused. Share God's love with them. Faith and Liberty Battaglia had a right to life just like you and me. May we all work together to make our homes a place of love and a place of safety. No one deserves to be abused!!!

1. Focus on the Family - www.family.org
2. *The Clarion Ledger*, Jackson, MS
3. Center for Prevention of Sexual or Domestic Violence. "What Every Congregation Needs to Know About Domestic Violence."
4. www.ncadv.org/problem
5. Ibid

If you are interested in receiving Christian Action updates via the internet and will share this information with friends and your church, please e-mail us at rwood@mbcb.org. Include your name, address, phone number, and church name.



abuse: physical, sexual, psychological, and threats against property and pets. Physical assault involves shoving, hitting, kicking, pushing, restraining, and other forms of abusive force. Sexual assault occurs anytime one partner forces sexual acts which are unwanted or declined by the other partner. Isolation from family and

the fact is that an abuser may be a good provider for his family, a sober and upstanding member of the community and a respected member of his congregation. He often believes that he is the head of the household and should not be challenged. If he is, then he often resorts to physical force to solve problems, sometimes unaware that he is hurting and destroying the ones he loves.

It is imperative for the Christian community to take an active role in helping educate our people as to the severity of the problem and possible solution. Some con-

Graham sets records during Dallas stint

IRVING, Texas (BP) — Evangelist Billy Graham broke attendance records for suburban Dallas' Texas Stadium the last two nights of the Oct. 17-20 Metroplex Mission.

Mission organizers said that 11,097 spiritual decisions were recorded that will be passed along to the 1,000-plus area churches that helped sponsor the mission and agreed to follow up on converts.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) spokesperson Beth Ellis said 4.4% of the nearly 255,000 people attending mission meetings made decisions for Christ.

"That's a very good response for a mission that was held in the Bible belt where you have a lot of church attendees," Ellis said.

A Saturday night service aimed at a youth audience broke the attendance record for the Dallas-area stadium in Irving, drawing 82,000, with 12,000 of the predominantly teenage crowd watching a big screen in an overflow section of the parking lot.

Area churches moved their Sunday evening services to Texas Stadium, and the previous night's record was broken again with 83,500 in attendance.

A torrential rainfall Friday night didn't deter that night's crowd, down by only 3,000 from the opening night. Another 18,000 attended an evangelistic children's program Saturday morning.

In an effort to reach out to diverse cultures, translation was offered for nine language groups during the mission.

The north Texas crusade proved that crusade evangelism still works when local churches do their part in bringing unchurched friends and following up on spiritual decisions by discipling new converts, said Frank Harber, pastor of First Church of Colleyville, Texas.

"Our church took it dead serious," Harber said, describing the church's commitment to provide five to seven chartered buses to each night's meeting. "We're on those buses operating like Southwest Airlines with peanuts and Cokes as they get on board," he said.

Thirty-five of the passengers made some type of spiritual decision during the first three nights, he said, adding, "We already have 14 people scheduled for baptism."

Paul Varnedoe, the church's minister of evangelism, coordinated follow-up of the individ-

uals who traveled to the crusade each night. On the ride home visitors completed surveys through which they related any spiritual decisions or lingering questions about faith in Christ.

Harber and Varnedoe praised the followup process pioneered by BGEA to make sure new converts are contacted by nearby churches. A BGEA-commissioned

study of 15,000 inquirers responding at Graham's crusades over a 30-year period determined that 70-80% of them remain steadfast in their decision to follow Christ.

New Christians will receive a letter in the mail right away," Varnedoe said. "but we'll already know about the decisions made by those we transported and they'll be scheduled for baptism before that letter even arrives."

That personal attention made the difference for Sandra Viles of Kansas City, whose son invited her to visit and attend the mission. "When I found out Billy Graham was coming here, I thought that was an opportunity to invite my mom down," Viles told the Dallas Morning News.

His mother accepted the invitation and made a profession of faith in Christ.

Sandra Viles told the paper, "I just felt it was time and [God] was calling me to come down there and do what he wants me to do. I felt like I really need to be on the right path in my life and that things will be better for me and my family."

Jo Raibley of Inglewood Church in Grand Prairie also took advantage of her church's free transportation to invite her daughter to the meeting. Just eight years younger than the evangelist, Raibley said Graham's message appeals to all ages.

"He plugs in a sense of humor along the way and I think that appeals to any generation — maybe especially to young people," she said.

Raibley was among the 456,000 people who attended Graham's 10-day crusade in 1971 when the Dallas Cowboys showed off their new stadium.

"Billy Graham has many, many friends and it's just really a reunion when he comes back here to all of these people," she said. "I just think it's an experience that you'll never forget, that television cameras cannot capture."



SEEKING SALVATION — Attendees begin to fill the floor of Texas Stadium after an invitation by Billy Graham to turn to Jesus as their Lord and Savior during the Metroplex Mission October 17-20 in Texas Stadium in suburban Dallas. (BP photo by Richard McCormack)

Southern Baptist leaders from the Dallas-Fort Worth area chaired key committees for the Metroplex Mission and played a part in offering the initial invitation that led to the meeting being scheduled.

Fort Worth pastor Michael Dean of Travis Avenue Church estimated that two-thirds of the participating churches were Southern Baptist.

Dean told of traveling on a Greyhound bus from Wichita Falls to attend the 1971 Dallas crusade where he saw a fellow high school student saved. Often described as the nation's pastor, Graham has advised numerous presidents and most recently calmed a grieving country and offered a gospel presentation three days after last year's Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Graham has ties to the Texas area, holding membership in First Church of Dallas and where his wife's brother, the late Clayton Bell, pastored Highland Park Presbyterian Church.

As the mission drew to a close Sunday night, Graham looked up at the sky through the opening in the stadium roof and said, "I believe that people from heaven can see us."

He spoke of the late Tom Landry, coach of the Dallas Cowboys and a leader with Fellowship of Christian Athletes who "would go before us in every crusade and make speeches to let people know about our meetings."

In addition to the passing of Bell and Johnny Lenning, an Hour of Decision radio producer whose son, Scott, directed the Metroplex Mission, Graham said there were many other people he loved who normally would have been at the Dallas mission.

"I preached every night from this Bible given to me by the one that edited it," Graham said, citing the inscription from the late W. A. Criswell, longtime pastor of First Church of Dallas.

Standing for nearly 40 minutes to deliver a Sunday night message from John 5, Graham

provided the overflow crowd with a doctrinal overview of atonement, beginning with Abraham's willingness to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice and God's intervention by providing a ram, then moving on to describe the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

"In Colossians 1 it says we have peace through his blood, shed on the cross. We don't like to talk about blood anymore even though we see it on our television screens all the time from criminals and in wars."

Directing their attention to Jesus' healing of the invalid man at the Bethesda pool, Graham said, "This man that had been waiting for 38 years tried everything. Jesus went to him because he was probably in the worst condition of anybody there and nobody had been able to help him."

In the same way that Jesus looked at the invalid man with tenderness and love, Jesus motivates Christians to help people who are suffering from injustice, homelessness and sickness, Graham said. "He sees you, living in a world of hurts," Graham told those listening.

Each night Graham described the Gospel's power to combat problems that are often the focus of the evening news. "The heart of our problem is sin," he said, referring to the motivation behind the Washington, D.C.-area shooter and the "supernatural power" that gave terrorists the ability to hit the World Trade Center.

"That supernatural personality is the devil. Who could have ever thought and planned such a thing?" Graham asked.

He appealed to those gathered to follow Jesus Christ by professing faith in him, repenting of sin and believing that God raised Christ from the dead.

"You're thinking of things right now you'd have to quit, but the Holy Spirit comes to help you and as you live the Christian life, he helps you do that," Graham said.



Graham

Bibliocipher

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VNNF PIJDGNTMNC XC

ERN TIMN IA ZIW,

TIIIVXCZ AID ERN

HNDSP IA IJD TIDW

BNGJC SRDXGE JCEI

NENDCLT TXAN.

BJWN EKNCEP-ICN

Clue: I = O

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Colossians One:Twenty-One